# Press release

PRINTABLE VERSION

## The Met. Office and Southampton Oceanography Centre provide new exhibit at The Science Museum

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An exhibit demonstrating a robot float for monitoring the world's oceans is included in the new Welcome Wing of the Science Museum. The exhibit shows a working Argo float, 3,000 of which are planned to drift globally at a 'parking depth' of 2000 metres. Every two weeks the floats will return to the ocean surface - measuring temperatures and salinities (saltiness) as they rise - and will transmit the data they have gathered via a satellite link, before sinking back to their parking depth to drift with the currents for another two weeks. From their successive positions, the ocean currents at 2,000 metres depth are determined every two weeks.

Over the next five years Argo will become a vital system to allow oceanographers and meteorologists to monitor the oceans and detect variations that could lead to changes in our climate as a consequence of global warming. Argo is also expected to provide ocean data that will lead to better long-term forecasts and improved warning of floods and droughts for many vulnerable areas of the world.

The concept of free-drifting floats was originally developed in the mid-1950s in the UK and US, and the Argo project is the result of many years of research and development. It is a truly international project, endorsed by the World Meteorological Organization and Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, and is already being supported by the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Germany, Canada, Japan, Korea, Australia and the European Union.

The UK's contribution to Argo is being funded by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, the Ministry of Defence and the Natural Environment Research Council, and is managed on their behalf by The Met. Office. Southampton Oceanography Centre (SOC), the British Oceanographic Data Centre and the UK Hydrographic Office are also participating in the project

For more information on Argo visit http://www.met-office.gov.uk/sec5/OA/Argo/Argo.html

or for information about SOC floats see http://www.soc.soton.ac.uk/JRD/HYDRO/shb/palace.html

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